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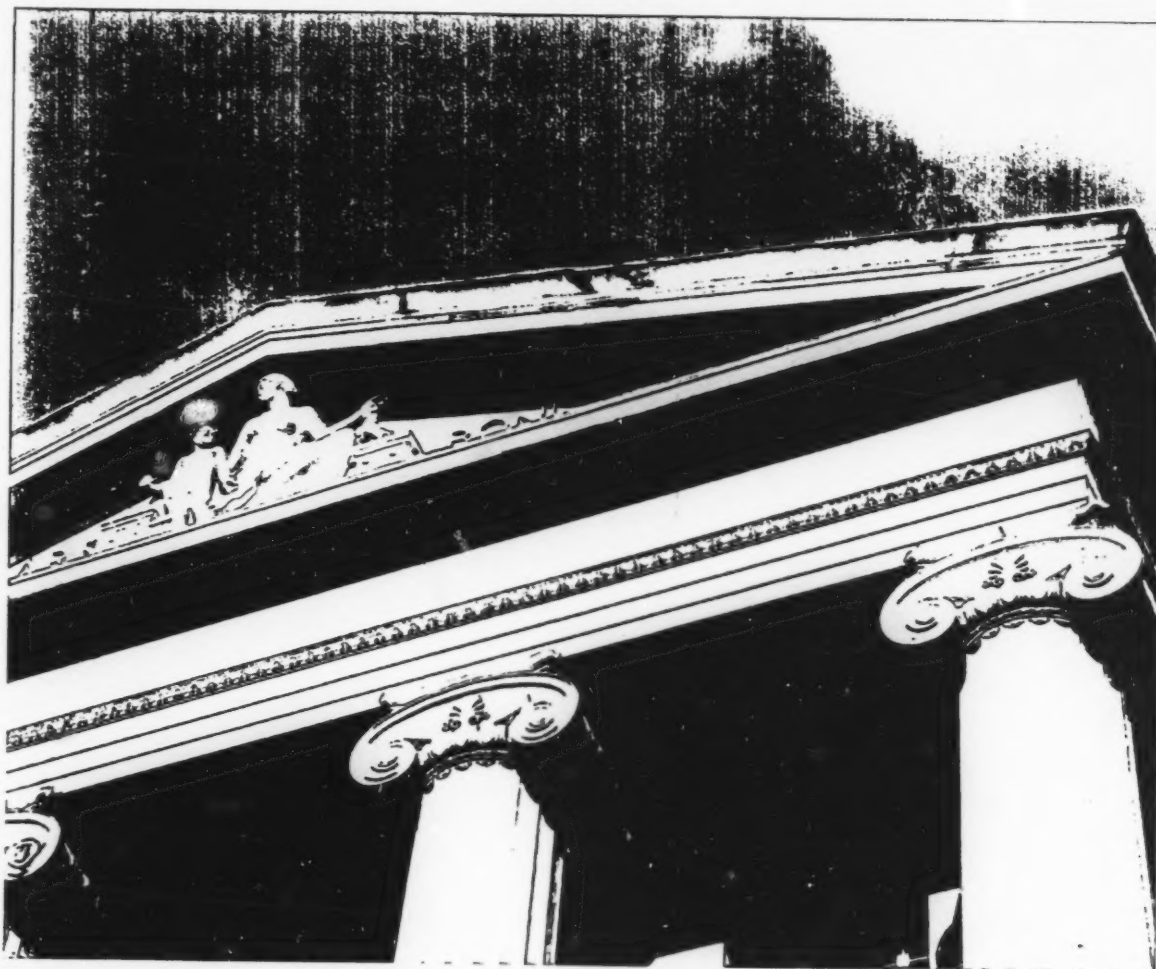
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ABSTRACT

Secure state correctional facilities currently house more than 1.8 million adults, and nearly 4.4 million adults fall under state-administered community corrections. A state's approach to corrections and the communication between the state correctional components can have a large impact on the state's correctional education program. Decentralized systems can lead to inconsistencies offered to offenders and to duplication of services. State correctional programs are also shaped by their own government structure, which can be separate from the governing structure of corrections. State corrections systems also differ significantly from the standpoints of funding sources, correctional philosophy, and pertinent laws. Low literacy is pervasive in prisons, and the percentage of inmates with learning disabilities is estimated to be higher than in the general adult population. Correctional education instructors face numerous significant challenges. Improving inmates' literacy skills is a central component of correctional education. In response to changing inmate demographics, increasing numbers of correctional programs are offering family literacy programs to improve parents' and children's literacy skills and to maintain and strengthen family relationships. The correctional education programs in Maryland, Ohio, and Texas illustrate how the structure of correctional education programs varies by state. (Contains 105 endnotes and 32 recommended resources.) (MN)

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STATE CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS



State Policy Update

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STATE CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

State Policy Update

Developed by Michelle Tolbert

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State Policy Update

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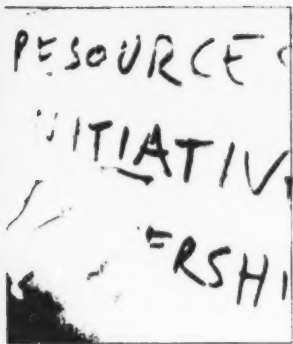
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STATE CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS STATE POLICY UPDATE

Overview

Ensuring that prisoners are prepared to return to society is becoming an increasingly important issue for policymakers to address considering the growing number of inmates expected to be released from prison in the coming years. In fact, nearly 600,000 inmates were released in 2000. Most startling, however, is the number of adults who will be rearrested after they are released, the majority for parole violations. Approximately two-thirds of federal and state inmates released on parole are rearrested within three years of leaving prison and almost half are reincarcerated.¹

The societal costs of the number of adults rearrested and reincarcerated are great. A high rate of recidivism, for example, "translate[s] into thousands of new victimizations each year."² Not only is public safety a factor, but there are also fiscal and social consequences of recidivism.³ From 1982 to 1998, state spending on each of the major criminal justice functions (police, judicial, and corrections) increased 332 percent, from close to \$11 billion in 1982 to nearly \$46 billion in 1998.⁴ Moreover, the \$46 billion does not include the cost to the victims. A high rate of recidivism also disrupts family and community life, endangers public health, and may lead to disenfranchisement and homelessness.⁵

While more research is needed to determine ways to reduce recidivism, a recent study funded by the U.S. Department of Education found that participation in state correctional education programs lowered the likelihood of reincarceration by 29 percent.⁶ Similar results have also been found in other studies, including a Federal Bureau of Prisons study that showed a 33 percent drop in recidivism among federal inmates who were enrolled in vocational and appren-

ticeship training.⁷ These programs lead to lower recidivism rates, according to advocates, because they provide inmates with the knowledge, skills, attitude, and values needed to succeed in society and to avoid future criminal activity.⁸ In addition, correctional education reduces the idleness rate among inmates while incarcerated, deterring prisoner misconduct and, in turn, creating a safer environment for prison administration and staff.⁹ Despite these benefits, state spending on correctional education has not kept pace with the growth in the prison population, which has nearly doubled in size over the last decade. In other words, the percentage of prisoners being served by state correctional education programs has decreased, resulting in an inmate population less prepared to be released from prison than in years past.¹⁰

This State Policy Update provides background on the criminal justice system, summarizes the funding sources, correctional philosophy, and laws affecting state correctional education programs, and describes the adult prison population today. In addition, the Update reviews the various components of correctional education, discusses the benefits of education to inmates, and highlights correctional education initiatives in three states—Maryland, Ohio, and Texas.

The Criminal Justice System

Total Number of Adults under Correctional Supervision December 31, 2000

JURISDICTION	NUMBER UNDER CORRECTIONAL SUPERVISION
U.S. Total	6,467,200
Federal	238,800
State	6,228,400
Alabama	79,500
Alaska	9,500
Arizona	101,100
Arkansas	55,300
California	698,600
Colorado	70,600
Connecticut	73,600
Delaware	27,200
District of Columbia	25,500
Florida	422,600
Georgia	406,800
Hawaii	22,800
Idaho	45,500
Illinois	231,400
Indiana	144,300
Iowa	34,900
Kansas	32,600
Kentucky	46,900
Louisiana	103,800
Maine	10,600
Maryland	132,500
Massachusetts	70,000
Michigan	251,900
Minnesota	128,600
Mississippi	39,900
Missouri	96,600
Montana	10,700
Nebraska	27,800
Nevada	30,700
New Hampshire	8,400
New Jersey	188,900
New Mexico	22,700
New York	353,700
North Carolina	151,200
North Dakota	4,500
Ohio	272,500
Oklahoma	61,400
Oregon	79,800
Pennsylvania	266,800
Rhode Island	26,700
South Carolina	76,800
South Dakota	9,400
Tennessee	84,600
Texas	755,700
Utah	20,000
Vermont	11,500
Virginia	88,100
Washington	183,100
West Virginia	12,700
Wisconsin	96,000
Wyoming	7,200

SOURCE: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.

Described as a "vast network of interlocking yet separate systems,"¹¹ the criminal justice system is composed of offenders correctionally supervised at the local, state, and federal levels. The majority of the correctional population, however, is a state and local responsibility. The Federal Bureau of Prisons, which operates under its own set of policies and procedures, is responsible for just under 240,000 of the nearly 6.5 million convicted offenders in the United States.¹² This Update, therefore, will focus on correctional education occurring at the state and local levels, although comparisons to the federal correctional education program will be made.

Correctional supervision typically comes in the form of jails, prisons, probation, and parole. Stefan LoBuglio, in *The Annual Review of Learning and Literacy*, described correctional supervision as follows:

Although the term corrections is often thought to be interchangeable with the term prisons, it actually refers to a variety of agencies and institutions that provide some form of court-mandated supervision of adults suspected or convicted of criminal offenses. These institutions include prisons and jails, which are both characterized by secure correctional facilities, and probation and parole, which are referred to as community corrections because these programs supervise convicted criminal offenders who reside and work outside correctional facilities.¹³

Secure state correctional facilities—jails and prisons—house over 1.8 million adults. More than 600,000 of those adults are housed in local jails.¹⁴ Overseen by city or county correctional agencies, jails house offenders awaiting trial or serving short sentences, and therefore typically do not offer correctional education programs.¹⁵ There are exceptions, however. For example, Massachusetts has established formal correctional education programs in its county run jails and houses of correction, as well as in its state prisons.¹⁶ Yet the majority of correctional programs in the United States are found in prisons, where inmates generally are serving longer sentences.¹⁷ Currently, there are approximately 1.3 million adults housed in state prisons.¹⁸

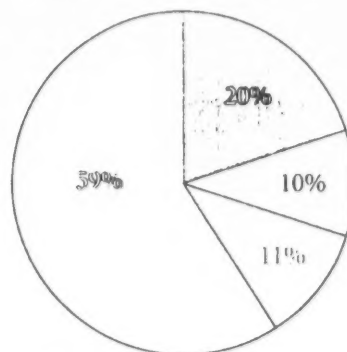
Nearly 4.4 million adults fall under state-administered community corrections, such as probation or parole.¹⁹ Offenders are placed under probation when a judge determines that the offender would benefit from being correctionally supervised outside of prison rather than being sentenced to prison. On the other hand, depending on state laws, parole is awarded by state-appointed parole boards to inmates who behave well in prison and who are believed to pose a low public safety risk (discretionary release) or, more commonly today, is mandatory after inmates serve a predetermined amount of their sentence (mandatory parole). Currently, 5 states have abolished discretionary release for violent crimes and 15 states have abolished it entirely.²⁰ In addition, truth-in-sentencing laws requiring violent offenders to serve at least 50 percent of their sentences have been passed in 40 states, diminishing the authority of parole boards in those states.²¹ There is concern, however, that the elimination or curtailing of state parole boards prevents inmates' behaviors and actions in prison from being assessed prior to their release. In addition, these laws may also eliminate an incentive for inmates to participate in rehabilitative programs (e.g., correctional education and drug treatment) that typically are viewed favorably by parole boards.²² Nevertheless, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, "regardless of their method of release, nearly all state prisoners (at least 95 percent) will be released from prison at some point; nearly 80 percent will be released to parole supervision."²³

Once on parole, offenders are generally not required to participate in education programs. The same is true with probationers.²⁴ Rather, all probationers and parolees are required to report regularly to an assigned officer to review with the officer their progress in the workforce and in any court-mandated programs (e.g., drug treatment or anger management counseling).²⁵ While education may not be a coordinated effort in all community corrections programs, parolees and probationers do receive recommendations about community adult education programs through their probation or parole officers, as well as through their state's one-stop career centers.²⁶ Some states do, however, have coordinated programs to assist parolees with their return to society. In Texas, for example, inmates who qualify are given the opportunity to participate in Project RIO, a program that helps inmates with employment both pre- and post-release (for more information on Project RIO, see p. 28).

While there are some similarities between states with regard to their community corrections and secure facilities, no two states are totally alike in how they

Adults Under Federal & State Correctional Supervision

FORM OF CORRECTIONAL SUPERVISION	NUMBER OF ADULTS
Probation	3,839,532
Parole	725,527
Jail	621,149
Prison	1,312,354



- ☐ Probation
- ☐ Parole
- ☐ Jail
- ☐ Prison

SOURCE: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

approach corrections. Some states have a more centralized correctional system with one authority governing all the various correctional components, while others are decentralized to varying degrees with separate agencies overseeing probation, parole, jails, and prisons. A state's approach to corrections and the communication between the correctional components, however, can have a large impact on the state's correctional education program.²⁷ A decentralized system, for example, can lead to inconsistencies in the education offered to offenders, as well as duplication of efforts. LoBuglio describes these inconsistencies as follows:

This fragmented system has a deleterious effect on correctional education programs as the correctional population moves among these institutions. An accused offender may begin his correctional experience in a local jail, wind up in a state prison after receiving a criminal conviction, and get parole for good behavior at the same time that he serves a sentence of probation, which might require him to attend a day reporting center. As offenders move within and between these institutions, they rarely are provided a consistent and uniform level of educational programming.²⁸

A state's correctional education program is also shaped by its own governing structure, which can be separate from the governing structure of corrections. While the majority of state correctional education programs are administered by a central office within the state's Department of Corrections, other states administer correctional education through central offices operating either through the state's Department of Education or independently. Some states contract out their correctional education services.²⁹ There are pros and cons to each type of governing structure, with each type having a notable effect on the correctional education program in areas such as funding, teacher certification requirements, whether instructors are viewed as correctional officers or simply as instructors, and the acceptance of education in the correctional institution.³⁰

Funding Sources, Correctional Philosophy, and Laws

Since the 1970s, there has been a steady rise in the number of prisoners due to increased drug offenses and tougher sentencing laws (e.g., mandatory parole and truth-in-sentencing) that lengthen the average prison sentence. As the primary source of funding for state correctional institutions, states have responded to this growth in the correctional population by sharply increasing funding for the construction and operation of prisons. In fact, spending on prisons was the fastest growing budget line item in nearly every state over the last decade. State funding for correctional education, however, has not increased at the same level.³¹

The difference in funding between correctional education and the construction and operation of prisons can be attributed to a shift in correctional philosophy that began in the mid-1970s. With the effectiveness of rehabilitation coming under fire, crime rates rising, and the political environment becoming more fiscally and socially conservative, states and federal prisons shifted away from a rehabilitative approach to a more punitive approach toward corrections.³² Today, correctional institutions are primarily viewed as a means of removing criminals from the community.³³

Correctional philosophy also influences how correctional education programs are run within the institutions. For class attendance to be encouraged and strictly enforced by correctional officers, the education programs need to have strong and constant support from the wardens and superintendents of the prisons. If that support does not exist, the programs will suffer.³⁴ LoBuglio describes this relationship as follows:

Correctional education programs depend on the cooperation of correctional officers who let the inmates out of

Number of sentenced inmates incarcerated under State and Federal jurisdiction per 100,000, 1980-2000

YEAR	NUMBER OF INMATES
1980	139
1981	154
1982	171
1983	179
1984	188
1985	202
1986	217
1987	231
1988	247
1989	276
1990	297
1991	313
1992	332
1993	359
1994	389
1995	411
1996	427
1997	444
1998	461
1999	476
2000	478

SOURCE: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.

Direct expenditures by criminal justice function, 1982-98

YEAR	POLICE	JUDICIAL	CORRECTIONS
1982	\$19,022,184,000	\$7,770,785,000	\$9,048,947,000
1983	\$20,648,200,000	\$8,620,604,000	\$10,411,363,000
1984	\$22,685,766,000	\$9,463,180,000	\$11,793,744,000
1985	\$24,399,355,000	\$10,628,816,000	\$13,534,897,000
1986	\$26,254,993,000	\$11,485,446,000	\$15,759,366,000
1987	\$28,767,553,000	\$12,555,026,000	\$17,548,769,000
1988	\$30,960,824,000	\$13,970,563,000	\$20,299,155,000
1989	\$32,794,182,000	\$15,588,664,000	\$22,566,622,000
1990	\$35,923,479,000	\$17,356,826,000	\$26,153,654,000
1991	\$38,971,240,000	\$19,298,379,000	\$29,297,200,000
1992	\$41,326,531,000	\$20,988,888,000	\$31,461,433,000
1993	\$44,036,756,000	\$21,558,403,000	\$31,946,667,000
1994	\$46,004,536,000	\$22,601,706,000	\$34,864,322,000
1995	\$48,644,529,000	\$24,471,689,000	\$39,752,230,000
1996	\$53,007,425,000	\$26,157,907,000	\$41,028,843,000
1997	\$57,753,530,000	\$28,528,774,000	\$43,511,148,000
1998	\$60,828,213,000	\$29,901,380,000	\$45,169,860,000

SOURCE: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.

their living units and monitor classroom activities along with performing a host of other duties. Wardens and superintendents who value rehabilitative programs make sure that the incentives are properly structured and that correctional staff willingly and consistently ensure the smooth operation of these programs. Institutions that have prison administrators who are indifferent to rehabilitation programs and are plagued by labor-management disputes often have poorly functioning programs that are cancelled for a variety of security reasons.³⁵

Correctional education programs are also impacted in many states by state-passed mandatory education laws. These laws require inmates who score below a certain grade level on a standardized test (e.g., the Test of Adult Basic Education) to attend correctional education courses while in prison.³⁶ At least 26 states have instituted mandatory education laws, with most requiring adults who score below the 8th grade level to participate in educational programming for a specified period of time or until they meet a set achievement level.³⁷ The Federal Bureau of Prisons has also implemented a mandatory education policy, requiring inmates who do not have a high school diploma or a GED to participate in literacy programs for a minimum of 240 hours or until they obtain their GED.³⁸ While the 8th grade level continues to be the most common achievement level states use, more and more states are moving to the high school diploma or GED achievement level. The achievement level a state selects helps to shape the correctional education program by influencing what is emphasized in the classroom, whether that is literacy skills, the GED, or lifelong learning.³⁹ Enrollment in correctional education is also required in many states if the inmate is under a certain age, as specified by that state's compulsory education law.⁴⁰ In addition, most states and the Federal Bureau of Prisons provide positive and/or negative incentives for inmates to enroll in education classes, such as earlier eligibility for parole, extending visitation privileges, and reinstating days required to be served prior to being eligible for parole.⁴¹

In addition to state efforts, the federal government has provided monetary support to state correctional education programs since the mid-1960s. The largest source of funding has been the Adult Education Act, replaced in 1998 by the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), Title II of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) (P.L. 105-220). Prior to the 1998 legislation, states were required to spend no less than 10 percent of their Basic State Grant for Adult Education on educational programming in state institutions, including correctional institutions. Today, the law requires that they spend no more than

10 percent. As a result, while some states may be allocating 10 percent of their Basic State Grant to correctional education, others may be allocating a much lower percentage. Funding under the AEFLA is to be used for the cost of basic education, special education, English literacy, and secondary school credit. The legislation also stipulates that priority in enrollment should be given to those inmates who are within five years of release.⁴²

The AEFLA also helps to clarify the responsibility of correctional institutions to accommodate individuals with disabilities. The law, in conjunction with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (P.L. 101-366),⁴³ requires correctional institutions to provide education services to inmates under the age of 22 who have disabilities. In addition, the AEFLA, along with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (P.L. 101-336) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-112),⁴⁴ requires states to provide reasonable accommodations to students of all ages who have disabilities. This requirement has been reinforced by multiple court rulings, such as the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Pennsylvania Department of Corrections v. Yeskey*. The Supreme Court ruled in this case that Title II of ADA applies to state prisons and that state prisons must make "reasonable modifications" that do not "fundamentally alter" their programs or impose "undue financial or administrative burden" in order to accommodate individuals with disabilities.⁴⁵ Even with these protections, however, states often fall short of fully providing for inmates with learning disabilities on account of shortages in funding, staff, and equipment.⁴⁶

In addition to the AEFLA, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Act as amended in 1998 (P.L. 105-332) provides funding to states to improve the vocational and technical education programs offered in correctional institutions. Prior to 1998, states were required to spend at least one percent of their federal funding on vocational and technical education programs in state institutions, including correctional institutions. The 1998 legislation, however, specifies that no more than one percent of the funds can be spent on such programs.⁴⁷ Similar to AEFLA, this change in the Perkins law has resulted in some states allocating much less than one percent of their federal vocational and technical funding on prison programs.

Other federal funding sources for state correctional education programs include the Workplace and Community Transition Training for Incarcerated Youth Offenders state grant and the Neglected and Delinquent Youth state

grant. Authorized by the Higher Education Act as amended in 1994 (P.L. 103-382), the Incarcerated Youth Offender grant provides funding for programs in state prisons that encourage incarcerated youths (age 25 and younger) to acquire functional literacy, life, and job skills by earning a post-secondary education degree or vocational training certificate while in prison. The Neglected and Delinquent Youth state grant, established by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1991 (P.L. 101-250) and recently amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (P.L. 107-110), funds organizations, including correctional institutions, that work to improve the transition from school to employment for neglected and delinquent youth who are being released from prison.⁴⁸

The Office of Correctional Education (OCE), U.S. Department of Education, is also appropriated money for discretionary grant programs. One such program is the Life Skills for State and Local Prisoners. Under this competitive grant program, grant recipients are provided funding to establish and operate programs designed to reduce recidivism through the development and improvement of life skills necessary for the reintegration of adult inmates into the community. The skills that fall under "life skills" include: self-development, communication skills, job and financial skills development, education, interpersonal and family relationship development, and stress and anger management.⁴⁹

Several federal grant/funding programs that supported components of correctional education suffered during the 1990s as the U.S. Congress looked for ways to "get tough on crime." One such program was Pell grants, which fund the post-secondary education of low-income students. Prior to the 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act (P.L. 103-317), inmates were eligible for the grant. The 1994 law, however, made inmates ineligible to receive Pell grants, as well as some other forms of financial assistance. Subsequent changes to the law have also prohibited anyone with a prior conviction of certain drug offenses from receiving Pell grants.⁵⁰ Correctional institutions also lost funding when Congress made changes in 1996 to the Library Services and Construction Act of 1990. Since these changes were made, correctional institutions have had difficulty qualifying for funding to support their libraries under what is now titled the Library Services and Technology Act (P.L. 104-208).⁵¹ However, according to messages posted on the PRISON-LIB listserv, several correctional libraries in states such as California, Ohio, Washington, and Wisconsin have been successful in applying for and receiving funds under the Act.⁵²

Demographics of the Prison Population

Federal and state funding for educational programming in state correctional institutions helps to address the multiple and diverse needs of a prison population that has nearly doubled in size over the last decade. Compared to 10 years ago, the prison population today is composed of more drug offenders, mentally ill adults, and adults with infectious diseases.⁵³ In fact, second to violent offenses, drug offenses accounted for the largest growth (20 percent) since 1990 in the state inmate population.⁵⁴ In the federal prison population and in the female state prison population, the number of prisoners convicted of drug offenses over the last decade is even higher than those convicted of violent offenses.⁵⁵ The number of mentally ill inmates has also increased since 1990 as a result of deinstitutionalization.⁵⁶ In 2000, an estimated 191,000, or 16.2 percent, of state prisoners were mentally ill. That same year, one in every eight state prisoners was receiving some form of mental health therapy or counseling.⁵⁷ With regard to infectious diseases, today's inmate population has higher rates of AIDS, hepatitis C, and tuberculosis. In fact, according to one analysis, the rate of infectious diseases in prisons is five times as high as in the general population.⁵⁸

Today's prison population is also composed of nearly twice as many female inmates than in 1990. While the size of the male inmate population has grown by 77 percent since 1990, the female inmate population has grown by 108 percent. The racial and ethnic makeup of the prison population, however, has remained relatively constant. In 2000, 46 percent of the state and federal inmate population were black, 36 percent were white, and 16 percent were Hispanic.⁵⁹

What has not remained the same, though, is the number of inmates with minor children. Fifty-five percent of state and federal prisoners in 1999 were parents of minor children, totaling nearly 1.5 million children. This is an increase of nearly a half million children compared with 1991, when 1 million

Number of Sentenced Prisoners Under State or Federal Jurisdiction
By Gender, Race, and Hispanic Origin, 2000

	MALE			
	TOTAL	WHITE	BLACK	HISPANIC
	1,237,469	436,500	572,900	206,900
	FEMALE			
	TOTAL	WHITE	BLACK	HISPANIC
	83,668	34,500	37,400	10,000

SOURCE: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

children under 18 had an incarcerated parent.⁶⁰ While more research is needed, studies have shown that children of incarcerated parents are more likely to be depressed, emotionally withdrawn, rebellious, and prone to criminal behavior.⁶¹ However, as pointed out by the Urban Institute, "...understanding the impact of parental incarceration on children is complicated because the consequences may be related to any number of conditions—the parent-child separation, the crime and arrest that preceded the incarceration, or the general instability and inadequate care at home."⁶²

Low literacy is also a pervasive in prisons. The most recent data collected from the National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) conducted in 1992 shows that education and literacy levels were significantly lower among inmates than the general population. In fact, 7 out of 10 inmates scored at the lowest 2 levels of literacy as defined by the 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS).⁶³ In addition, only half of the inmates surveyed had attained a high school diploma, compared with 76 percent of the general population.⁶⁴ Prisons, therefore, are presented with a unique opportunity to provide an education to a large concentration of individuals who fall in a high-risk group and have significant literacy needs.⁶⁵

The National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL),⁶⁶ planned for 2002, will not include a sampling of incarcerated adults, and comparisons with the general adult population will be difficult since the prison population is composed of a disproportionate number of low-income, young, minority males. However, comparisons to adults with similar characteristics outside of the corrections system may be possible; these adults are also more likely to have low literacy skills.⁶⁷

In addition to low literacy levels, the percentage of inmates with learning disabilities is also estimated to be higher than the general adult population. While estimates vary with regard to the number of inmates with learning disabilities, a common estimate is that 30 to 50 percent of inmates have some type of learning disability.⁶⁸ Estimates of the number of adults in the general population with learning disabilities, on the other hand, range from 3 to 15 percent.⁶⁹ The term "learning disabilities" encompasses various disorders, as described in the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities definition. That definition states that:

learning disabilities is a general term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, and mathematical abilities. These disorders are intrinsic to the individual, presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction, and may occur across the life span.

Individuals with learning disabilities are often also affected by other factors such as sensory impairment, mental retardation, and social and emotional disturbance. These additional factors may exist with or without a learning disability; however, each factor can hinder an individual's ability to learn.⁷⁰

Correctional Education Instructors

Given the characteristics of the correctional population, instructors who teach in correctional institutions are faced with a number of significant challenges. As today's prison demographics show, the correctional education student body is composed of individuals with a high rate of learning, emotional, and behavioral disorders. In addition, correctional instructors, unlike instructors who teach adult education to the general population, must learn to work within an environment where lock downs, head counts, meetings with lawyers, and hearings regularly interrupt classroom instruction.⁷¹

Despite these challenges, there is a low turnover rate among correctional education instructors. Possible reasons for such a low turnover rate is that correctional education instructors typically work full-time, year-round, and earn a better salary and benefits package than other adult educators. In addition, while safety is a concern in correctional institutions, correctional instructors report that discipline is, on average, not a problem in their classrooms. Most inmates prefer to attend classes than to be assigned a job in the institution. In fact, a majority of correctional institutions report having waiting lists for their education programs. According to a survey of adult male medium security state facilities administered in 1996 by the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE), U.S. Department of Education, 56 percent of the facilities surveyed had waiting lists for their adult basic education courses.⁷²

Like other adult educators, correctional education instructors participate in a number of professional development activities. Generally they are not provided, however, with significant pre-service training on teaching in a correctional institution. In fact, a needs assessment study of correctional education instructors in Virginia found that "traditional teacher preparatory programs emphasize content knowledge, but do little to prepare educators to the reality of teaching in correction."⁷³ Instructors often do have the opportunity to partici-

pate in correctional training arranged for correctional officers by the state's correctional training academy and the institution's correctional training coordinator. Correctional educators also participate in professional associations' workshops and conferences in their specialized disciplines.⁷⁴ In addition to professional associations, the National Institute of Corrections (NIC), an agency within the U.S. Department of Justice, provides training, technical assistance, information services, and policy/program development assistance to federal, state, and local corrections agencies.⁷⁵ Another form of professional development available to correctional education instructors is the Corrections Learning Network, a distance learning initiative that is part of the STEP Star Network and funded through the U.S. Department of Education. The Corrections Learning Network provides broadcast and computer-based professional development for correctional education instructors and administrators, as well as instruction for incarcerated youth and adults.⁷⁶

Correctional Education

The U.S. Department of Education defines correctional education as “that part of the total correctional process that focuses on changing the behavior of offenders through planned learning experiences and learning environments. It seeks to develop or enhance knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values of incarcerated youth and adults.”⁷⁷ The U.S. Department of Justice, which oversees the Federal Bureau of Prisons, takes a similar view; it “recognize[s] the importance of education as both an opportunity for inmates to improve their knowledge and skills and as a correctional management tool that encourages inmates to use their time in a constructive manner.”⁷⁸

Like programs that provide adult education to the general population, correctional education programs generally include the following types of courses:

- ❖ Basic literacy skills (reading, writing, calculating, speaking, listening, and problem solving)
- ❖ General Education Development (GED)
- ❖ Post-secondary
- ❖ Special education
- ❖ English as a Second Language (ESL)

In addition to the above, correctional education programs also include courses in life skills and vocational training.⁷⁹

Given the low literacy levels found in prison, a central component of correctional education is improving inmates' literacy skills. Many correctional education programs have reading labs where inmates can work on their reading skills one-on-one with instructors, peer tutors, and/or community volunteers.⁸⁰ In addition, due to the growing number of inmates who are parents of minor children, more and more correctional education programs are offering family literacy programs. These programs not only help to improve the literacy skills of both parent and child, but they also help to maintain and strengthen family relationships. One example of such a program is the Reading is Fundamental Program, a child and family literacy program that helps prepare and motivate

children to read.⁸¹ Ohio uses a similar program, Ohio Reads, in each prison's visitor room, providing inmates with trained Laubach tutors, materials, and supplies in order to help them read to their children.⁸²

While there are multiple ways of working with inmates to improve their literacy skills, successful programs are generally defined as:

- ❖ Learner-centered, recognizing differences in cultures, learning styles, and literacy levels
- ❖ Participatory, engaging students in their own learning
- ❖ Contextualized, addressing students' needs outside of prison
- ❖ Sensitive to the prison culture
- ❖ Linked to post-release services

In addition, providing inmates with incentives to participate in correctional education programs and using trained community and peer tutors to supplement staff and instructors have proven to be effective.⁸³

The Correctional Education Association (CEA), a nonprofit, professional association serving educators and administrators who provide services to students in correctional settings, also examined "what works" in correctional education programs through a National Institute for Literacy grant. The CEA's findings have been compiled in a handbook of literacy assessment and instruction techniques entitled "Starting from Scratch." The CEA has also developed a list of 71 standards to serve as benchmarks of quality for adult and juvenile correctional education programs. Endorsed by the American Correctional Association, a multi-disciplinary organization of professionals serving as the umbrella organization for all areas of corrections, these standards have been used by the CEA for the last five years to accredit education programs. On average, 30 to 40 programs have been accredited each year.⁸⁴

Several of the CEA standards address the issue of learning disabilities.⁸⁵ In addition, a research-based guide on how to work with students with learning disabilities has been developed by the National Institute for Literacy. The guide, *Bridges to Practice*, provides information about instructional approaches that have been demonstrated to improve the outcomes of literacy instruction of individuals with learning disabilities, as well as the social, educational, and legal issues related to serving that population.⁸⁶ The first challenge for correctional education programs to successfully provide for inmates with learning disabilities, however, is to instill a belief in their instructors that these individuals learn differently than the general population. According to Neil Sturomski,



in "Learning Disabilities and the Correction System," instructors should also be trained to:

- Understand learning disabilities and their characteristics
- Apply screening and learning style inventories to improve practice
- Understand the differences between screening and formal assessment
- Use effective instructional practices including specific techniques and instructional strategies
- Use strategies training so that students can learn how to learn, think, and solve problems on their own
- Understand and use high and low technologies whenever possible
- Recognize the self-esteem and social skills issues of these adults and provide ways to foster development in these areas⁸⁷

Another area of need within the inmate population that is being addressed by more and more correctional education programs is the development and improvement of life skills. Recognizing that being literate does not guarantee success once an inmate is released from prison, the U.S. Department of Education established a discretionary grant to fund correctional education programs seeking to develop and improve the life skills necessary for the reintegration of adult prisoners into society. The Life Skills for State and Local Prisoners grant was first administered in 1993, with programs receiving non-renewable three-year grants. The grant program is currently in its third round, with 10 new programs being awarded 3-year grants in 2002.⁸⁸

An example of a program funded by the Life Skills grant is Maryland's Prison to Work project. Maryland received 1.2 million dollars over three years beginning in 1997 to develop and implement a course to provide inmates with an opportunity to explore career options based on their interests, aptitudes, and an educational/occupational training plan, as well as state labor market trends. In addition, the grant funded the development of a curriculum manual and resource handbook, partially adapted from National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (NOICC) publications.⁸⁹ Inmates enrolled in the Prison to Work course were asked to research local labor market needs and training opportunities by using computer software and other occupational resources provided by the program. They were also asked to develop a portfolio that includes documentation of their skills and credentials (e.g., all documentation necessary for employment, occupational competency profile, academic credentials, employment applications/resumes, and cover letters). Upon completion of the course, students were awarded a Maryland State Department of Education skills certificate, which signifies to employers and service providers that the inmate has met competencies and performance outcomes

based on the National Career Development Guidelines.⁹⁰ Once released from prison, inmates were also referred to One-Stop Career Centers, community colleges, and community organizations that could assist them with further developing their occupational and employability skills. The Prison to Work project has received positive feedback from an extensive external evaluation, program participants, and the Maryland Division of Correction. As a result, administrators of the Prison to Work project are currently exploring financial resources to continue and maintain the project, as the federal grant has come to an end.⁹¹

Another important component of successful correctional education programs is their relationship to other correctional services, such as vocational training, counseling, and drug treatment.⁹² Common vocational programs offered by state correctional institutions include: auto body repair/mechanics, brick masonry, carpentry, electronics, painting/drywall, plumbing, printing, and welding. In addition, the Federal Bureau of Prisons, as well as many states, holds mock job fairs, bringing employers and related service agencies to federal prisons in an effort to provide inmates with job application and interview experience, as well as job market information and an opportunity to network. The mock job fairs have also been shown to improve inmates' confidence with regard to finding work once released, and have helped to break down the negative stereotypes employers may have had of ex-offenders.⁹³

With many correctional education programs and other services financially limited in the number of inmates they can serve, library services offered by most correctional institutions provide a means to reach inmates who may otherwise not be exposed to educational and other types of reading material. The existence of a library within a correctional institution allows inmates to voluntarily pursue their reading interests. The role of a correctional library varies from state to state, as well as from prison to prison, depending on that state's or prison's policies and procedures.⁹⁴ Roles include providing inmates with "access to the courts,"⁹⁵ serving as a resource center for the correctional education program, and/or functioning like a public library. In addition, "...other roles must inevitably be determined by the resident customer."⁹⁶ The role a correctional library plays in an institution is also shaped by its resources. Many correctional libraries struggle to find enough resources to acquire and maintain books, provide up-to-date legal references, and pay for qualified staff.⁹⁷

Benefits of Correctional Education

With correctional education budgets not keeping pace with the growing correctional population, correctional education advocates are searching for ways to show policymakers that academic and vocational programs within prisons are worth a greater investment. Although those involved in correctional education generally believe there is intrinsic value to educating inmates, they also realize that in order to attract federal and state investment, they need to show a direct link between correctional education and lower recidivism rates. As a result, recidivism studies are being conducted throughout the nation by states, independent organizations, and the federal government. The accuracy of these studies, however, has been questioned for the following reasons:

- ❖ Most do not take into account other services and factors both inside and outside of prison that may affect recidivism rates, such as drug treatment programs, post-release services, and family support.
- ❖ Most of the results are vulnerable to self-selection bias; the methodologies do not adequately account for participant characteristics.
- ❖ Most do not follow released inmates for a long enough period of time.
- ❖ Most vary in their definition of recidivism; a nationally recognized definition of recidivism currently does not exist.
- ❖ Most are unable to measure various levels of improvement in inmates' behavior.
- ❖ Most are based on correctional education records that are often poorly kept by institutions.⁹⁸

Despite the problems involved with recidivism studies, there are a number of studies that address many of the above criticisms. The most recent is the Three State Recidivism Study conducted by the CEA with a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. This longitudinal study involved approximately 3,400 inmates who were released from correctional institutions in Maryland,

Minnesota, and Ohio more than three years ago. The study used participation in correctional education programs while incarcerated as the major variable, but also took into account over 500 variables such as: criminal history; family and community background; economic status and employment; educational experience; offender perspectives on education; and motivation factors that correlate highly with criminality. Rearrest, reconviction, and reincarceration data were also collected. The extensive information gathered on each inmate was used to rule out any self-selection bias and to ensure the comparability of the treatment group (correctional education participants) and control group (non-participants). After tracking the treatment and control groups for three years, the Three State Recidivism Study found that participation in correctional education programs reduced the probability of incarceration by 29 percent. Translated into fiscal terms, the study found that correctional education programs save more money than they cost.⁹⁹ "Annually, for every dollar spent on education more than two dollars are saved on food and cell space alone. Correctional education fights crime, cuts the costs for reincarceration and prepares many adults to return to society as productive citizens, taxpaying workers and positive parents."¹⁰⁰

A longitudinal recidivism study was also conducted by the Federal Bureau of Prisons in the late 1980s. The POST-RELEASE Employment Project (PREP) study collected data on more than 7,000 inmates from 1983 to 1987 to assess the effect of prison work experience and vocational or apprenticeship training on federal inmates after they were released from prison. Numerous variables were taken into account, such as criminal history, age, race, substance abuse history, and risk profiles. The results of the study showed that inmates who worked in prison industries were 24 percent less likely to recidivate. Those inmates who participated in apprenticeship or vocational training were 33 percent less likely to be reincarcerated. These programs proved to lower recidivism rates among released inmates as much as 8 to 12 years after their release.¹⁰¹

In addition to measuring the recidivism rate in order to show the benefit of correctional education, the U.S. Department of Education recommends that other measures be taken into account such as academic gains, behavioral changes, early release savings, and employment and increased earnings.¹⁰² The Federal Bureau of Prisons reports, "Correctional programs and activities also reduced inmate idleness and the stresses associated with living in prison. Such programs are critical to managing a safe and secure prison."¹⁰³

State Profiles

The following are profiles of correctional education programs in three states—Maryland, Ohio, and Texas. The profiles help to illustrate how the structure of correctional education programs varies from state to state. In addition, the profiles include information on accountability measures, correctional education programming, and other correctional education initiatives in each state.

Maryland

Nearly 24,000 men and women are incarcerated in Maryland's state prisons. The demographics of this population are as follows:

- Ninety-five percent are male.
- Nearly 75 percent are black and over 20 percent are white.
- Approximately 75 percent are high school dropouts.
- Over 50 percent were employed in low-wage sector jobs prior to incarceration.
- Most come from families and communities of poverty.
- Approximately 20 percent are incarcerated for drug-related offenses.
- Approximately 40 percent are incarcerated for a crime of violence.
- The average sentence length is 12.9 years; the average length of stay is 4.5 years.¹⁰⁴

The Division of Correction within the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Corrections is responsible for the care of all inmates in Maryland. Each institution is headed by a superintendent or warden. Education programs and library services within Maryland's correctional institutions, however, are administered and funded by the Maryland State Department of Education, through the Correctional Education Program within the Division of Career Technology and Adult Learning.¹⁰⁵ In addition, education and library services in all of Maryland's major correctional institutions are accountable to the Educational Coordinating Council for Correctional Institutions, which is composed of top state education and corrections officials, as well as members from the state of Maryland at large. The Council meets twice a year to review the progress of the correctional education program and decide issues of policy and programming.¹⁰⁶

Each institution's education program is headed by a school principal. In addition to the school principals, education program staff include approximately

180 full-time teachers, librarians, administrators, and secretaries. Education services are also provided by contractual employees and community colleges. All instructors are required to report directly to their institution's principal and to meet safety and security regulations set by the Division of Correction.¹⁰⁷

Maryland's Correctional Education Program serves over 10,000 inmates each year, with approximately 4,000 inmates participating in the program per day. Space in classes, however, is limited, requiring some inmates to wait several months for an opening. In fact, only 40 percent of Maryland's inmate population is able to attend school while incarcerated and only 19 percent is enrolled in the program on a daily basis. Assignment to education programs is determined by case managers employed by the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, with priority given to younger inmates. Inmates who do not have a high school diploma and are serving at least 18 months are required to go to school.¹⁰⁸ In addition, as stipulated by the IDEA, inmates up to age 22 with identified special education needs are eligible for immediate placement in the education program, regardless of their sentence length.¹⁰⁹

Maryland's education program aims to improve the inmates' functional literacy skills, as well as provide them with an opportunity to earn a high school diploma and a certification of completion for an entry-level occupational program.¹¹⁰ In 2001, nearly 1,000 inmates earned their high school diploma, over 1,500 inmates completed basic literacy/life skills certificates, and approximately 800 inmates completed a 600-hour occupational training program. The institution also employed over 500 inmates as educational aides. Even more inmates made use of the library services provided at each correctional institution; in 2001, over 194,000 visits were recorded and over 150,000 books were checked out.¹¹¹

Maryland's Correctional Education Program includes several initiatives that have received national recognition, such as its Peer Tutoring Program. The program, which has been recognized by the Correctional Education Association, the National Institute of Corrections, the American Correctional Association, and the U.S. Department of Education, is in all of Maryland's major correctional facilities. The peer tutors, under the supervision of full-time, trained Adult Basic Education instructors, assist their fellow inmates with reading, as well as with GED instruction in some facilities. The peer tutors also work closely with the special education programs, since many special education students are assigned to the reading labs. In exchange for their work, peer tutors

receive extra "good time" or earlier eligibility for parole. Maryland's Peer Tutoring Program has been successful not only with the inmates being tutored, but also with the peer tutors.¹¹² As noted by Steve Steurer, Academic Coordinator for Maryland's Correctional Education Program, "the tutors learn what it means to help someone and gain almost as much from the experience as their students."¹¹³

Another noteworthy initiative of Maryland's Correctional Education Program is its accountability system modeled after the Maryland School Performance Program (MSPP). The MSPP requires each school in Maryland to meet state standards in areas of student performance, attendance, and completion. Recognizing the need for Maryland's correctional schools to be held accountable for their results, the Education Coordinating Council for Correctional Institutions adapted the MSPP standards to correctional education. Correctional schools now collect and enter into a computerized collection system data such as:

- Yearly attendance rates
- Dropout rates
- GED passing rates
- Occupational program completions
- Adult literacy and life skills program completions

This data collection system allows the Correctional Education Program to track overall performance of students, programs, and correctional institutions. By establishing standards and goals in each of these data-based areas, the program has led to improvements in attendance, the GED passing rate, the number of high school diplomas awarded, and the number of certificates of Adult Literacy and Life Skills awarded. It also enables fiscal and programmatic accountability to the citizens of Maryland.¹¹⁴

To learn more about these and other Maryland Correctional Education Program initiatives, contact:

Maryland State Department of Education
Correctional Education Program
Dr. Carolyn Buser, Director
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21201
(410) 767-0458
<http://www.msde.state.md.us/>

Ohio

Insert: An outline/picture of the state of Ohio.

Like most other states, Ohio has seen a large growth in its inmate population. The total population has gone from 10,000 in 1971 to nearly 50,000 today.¹¹⁵

The demographics of Ohio's inmate population today are as follows:

- ❖ Ninety-four percent are male.
- ❖ Fifty-two percent are black and 47 percent are white.
- ❖ Roughly 75 to 80 percent are high school dropouts.
- ❖ The average achievement level is the 8th grade (based on the TABE).
- ❖ Approximately 60 percent were not employed or were employed in an entry-level job prior to incarceration.
- ❖ The majority are non-violent offenders with a history of drug and alcohol abuse.
- ❖ The average stay in prison is 3.14 years.¹¹⁶

Ohio's inmates are housed in 34 prisons, overseen by the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction. Each of the state's 34 correctional institutions is headed by a warden. Academic and vocational programs offered in these institutions are administered by the Ohio Central School System, which has a charter dating back to 1973 with the Ohio Department of Education. Although it has a charter with the Department of Education, the Ohio Central School System exists within the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction. As a result, the Superintendent of the Ohio Central School System reports to the Deputy Director of Prisons, who in turn reports to the Governor-appointed Director of the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction.¹¹⁷

The Ohio Central School System is divided into 13 regions, each headed by a principal. Regions may include two to three correctional institutions and one to two community-based correctional facilities. The school system also employs over 550 teachers, guidance counselors, administrators, and project directors.¹¹⁸

Ohio's Central School System enrolls over 13,000 inmates per year, approximately 28 percent of the total inmate population. Inmates without a high school diploma must participate in the education program. In addition, inmates with identified special education needs are eligible to enroll in the pro-

gram, according to federal and state law. Those inmates who are enrolled in the program are offered a variety of courses of study in Adult Basic Education, GED preparation, literacy skills, and vocational training. In addition, all program participants are required to set educational and occupational short-term goals to meet while incarcerated and long-term goals to meet when released, which the school system tracks.¹¹⁹

In addition to the general adult education courses provided, the Ohio Central School System incorporates cognitive skills into all aspects of its education program. The cognitive skills initiative came about when a report by the Ohio Legislative Office of Education Oversight questioned the value of providing academic and vocational instruction to inmates with a history of bad decision-making. The school system, as a result, began to explore ways to improve inmates' thinking and social skills, while at the same time providing them with literacy and vocational skills. A study team was assembled to conduct a nationwide search for strong cognitive skills programs and from that search it was determined that the services and instructional approaches provided by Positive Solutions were most aligned with the needs of the correctional education program. These needs were and continue to be:

- ❖ Program flexibility - the program needs to accommodate the different needs of the inmate population.
- ❖ Curriculum flexibility - curriculum should be easy to add on to and change, depending on the inmates' needs.
- ❖ Experience - the consultants should know how to work with correctional institutions.
- ❖ Cost effectiveness.
- ❖ Appropriate delivery methods - the program has to show inmates what they are doing wrong and teach them how to improve their behavior, bridging the gap between values and behaviors.

For the last five years, the Ohio Central School District, with the help of Positive Solutions, has been training instructors, developing lesson plans, and working to standardize the cognitive skills initiative to include all aspects of the education program. A quantitative analysis of the initiative is underway. In addition, Positive Solutions has a pre- and post-evaluation component built into the program. While it is too soon to assess the impact of the cognitive skills initiative on inmates in the Ohio Central School District, Positive Solutions has had success with other programs.¹²⁰ For example, according to a

three-year longitudinal study of Positive Solution's cognitive skills curriculum used by the State of Missouri, Department of Corrections, the recidivism rate among inmates who participated in the cognitive skills program was lower than those who did not participate.¹²¹

The Ohio Central School District also has been developing a distance-learning program in its correctional institutions. Currently, 12 institutions have live, two-way interactive systems that allow teachers in one institution to interact with inmates located in another institution. The Ohio Central School District chose an interactive system over using videos because they believe the participatory model works best with their inmates. The Ohio State Legislature also supports this approach; they see it as a tool to cut costs, particularly in light of potential future teacher shortages. In fact, in the early 1990s, the Ohio State Legislature made the distance-learning program a line item under the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction's budget. In addition, inmates have been very receptive to the program. Correctional education instructors are also beginning to feel more comfortable with the distance-learning format. As a result, the Ohio Central School District would ultimately like to have each correctional institution within the state to be equipped for distance learning. Depending on funding, they plan to equip three or four additional sites per year.¹²²

To learn more about these and other initiatives of the Ohio Central School System, such as its post-release centers serving the education needs of inmates upon release and its career, technical, and apprenticeship programs with linkages to the communities, please contact:

Ohio Central School System
1050 Freeway Drive North
Columbus, OH 43229
(614) 752-0305

Texas

Close to 700,000 adults are under correctional supervision in Texas, and nearly 135,000 of those adults are in prison. The demographics of the prison population are as follows:

- Ninety-four percent are male.

- ❖ Forty-three percent are black, 31 percent are white, and 25 percent are Hispanic.
- ❖ The average educational achievement level is 7.9 (based on the TABE).
- ❖ Violent offenders account for 55 percent of the prison population.
- ❖ Drug offenders account for 22 percent of the population.
- ❖ The average sentence length is 20.07 years.¹²³

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) is responsible for the correctional population in Texas. Correctional education provided in each of Texas's institutions, however, is the responsibility of the Windham School District, established by the Texas Legislature in 1969. The Windham School District reports to a school board, composed of members from the Texas Board of Criminal Justice. The school district, which is headed by a superintendent, is divided into five regions. Each region's correctional education program is administered by a regional assistant superintendent, and each school is headed by a principal. In total, the school district employs approximately 1,600 professional and paraprofessional staff members.¹²⁴

On a given day, the Windham School District enrolls approximately 30,000 Institutional Division and state jail inmates. In the 2000-2001 school year, the total number of inmates served was over 83,500.¹²⁵ These inmates enrolled in courses covering subjects such as life skills, literacy, and job skills. Last year alone, over 5,000 inmates earned a GED, nearly 8,500 were awarded Career and Technology Education certificates, almost 400 earned their associate's degrees, 61 earned their bachelor's degrees, 6 earned their masters degrees, and nearly 3,400 were awarded college vocational certificates. A large number of inmates also benefited from the 87 libraries maintained by the Windham School District; over 1.1 million books were circulated last year, in addition to newspapers and magazines.¹²⁶

Student performance in the correctional education programs offered by the Windham School District is tracked by the District's computer system. For the last three years, Windham has used an accountability system to evaluate schools based on information such as attendance, test scores, vocational completions, and GED completions. Similar to Texas public schools, the Windham School District uses this data to rate each school as follows: Low Performing, Acceptable, Recognized, and Exemplary. In the 2000-2001 school year, 10

institutions rated Low Performing, 34 rated Acceptable, 25 rated Recognized, and 13 rated Exemplary. In each category, the Windham School District made significant improvements compared with the previous year. Many of these improvements were the result of Assistance Teams working with the poor-performing institutions to determine ways to improve student attendance, course completions, and standardized test scores. The school district also has the rating system periodically reviewed by a committee composed predominantly of teachers, as well as administrators and staff, to ensure that the accountability measures are up-to-date and relevant. In addition to those responsibilities, the committee trains instructors within the Windham School District on the accountability measures.

The response to the new accountability system by Texas legislators and the Texas Education Agency was positive from the outset. Most teachers and administrators within the district were leery of the accountability system when it was first introduced. As the accountability system has become more widely understood within the district, however, the approval from teachers and administrators has greatly increased.¹²⁷

Windham School District, TDCJ, and the Texas Workforce Commission (the state agency charged with overseeing and providing workforce development services) have also collaborated on a project to assist inmates with their return to society. Beginning in 1989 with a state grant, the Texas Workforce Commission and the TDCJ began developing Project RIO, a program that helps inmates with employment both pre- and post-release, with the ultimate goal of reducing recidivism. Today, the program has nearly 74,000 inmates participating. To participate, inmates must be on good behavior, meet all the requirements of their Individual Treatment Plan, and be within three and half years but no less than three months of release. Prior to release, participants are provided with vocational assessment, job readiness training, and employability instruction. Project RIO staff also help participants collect all necessary documentation for employment prior to their release. In addition, participants can attend structured job search workshops to receive assistance with completing a job application, preparing a resume, and being interviewed. After release, the Texas Workforce Commission provides participants with individualized workforce development services, including job preparation and job search assistance.¹²⁸



In a recent evaluation of the Windham School District, the Criminal Justice Policy Council concluded that the district's educational programs had a positive effect on reducing recidivism. Also, the study reported that younger offenders, under the age of 35, had higher gains in achievement than older offenders. The greatest gains in reducing recidivism occurred with educational programming for younger, lower academic functioning offenders. The teaching and reading were found to be significant in reducing recidivism for illiterate offenders. In addition, the study identified several areas for improvement that Project RIO staff is currently addressing or plans to address in the future. For example, Project RIO hopes to collect more feedback from program participants after they have been placed in a job, in order to determine if the placement was successful. The staff also would like to improve the process of recalling participants when a more appropriate job becomes available. In addition, Project RIO is now using an electronic database to transfer information from TDCJ to the Texas Workforce Commission in order to be more efficient.

Overall, Project RIO has met with much success in Texas. Participants have responded positively to the program. According to one participant:

...Project RIO works. Not only does it help you find a job, they call and talk to the company before you have your interview. Get involved with Project RIO. When I went to the employment office under Project RIO, it made finding a job easy. I went for two interviews and got one job [with the second company]. But, the first company I applied with has already called me for a second interview and [also] wants to hire me.

In addition to the positive response from participants, three states—Georgia, New Mexico, and Oklahoma—have modeled their programs after Project RIO.¹²⁹

For more information on these and other correctional education initiatives in Texas, please contact:

Windham School District
P.O. Box 40
Huntsville, TX 77342-0040
(936) 291-5303
<http://www.windhamschooldistrict.org>

Conclusion

How correctional education is structured and offered in each state may differ, but the underlying rationale and benefits of correctional education are the same nationwide. As recidivism studies illustrate, correctional education lowers the likelihood of reincarceration and, in turn, protects the public from future crimes, as well as additional fiscal and social costs. Despite these benefits, correctional education has not received the federal and state investment it deserves. Today, the percentage of prisoners being served by state correctional education programs is lower than in years past, resulting in an inmate population less prepared to return to society. There is no question that more research on correctional education is needed, specifically on how correctional education helps to reduce recidivism and how it can be improved in order to further reduce recidivism. In the meantime, the correctional population is growing, and the communities and children left behind by incarcerated adults are suffering the consequences. Lowering recidivism may not be the only benefit to correctional education, but showing a link between reductions in recidivism and correctional education will help to convince policymakers, corrections officials, and the public as to the fiscal, social, and public safety benefits of correctional education.

Simply attracting more federal and state funding is not the only answer. First and foremost, correctional education programs need to be held accountable for their results, meaning programs need to improve communication between the various correctional components, as well as maintain better education records of their program participants. Well-maintained education records are particularly important today in light of the decision not to include incarcerated adults in the 2002 National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL).

In addition to meeting a higher accountability standard, a stronger relationship between correctional education and other adult education programs needs to be built. The challenges faced by correctional education programs, including an inmate population with low literacy levels and a high rate of learning, emotional, and behavioral disorders, are not unique; they are similar to the challenges faced by other adult education programs. What is unique, however, is that correctional education programs have the ability to positively and signifi-

cantly impact a large concentration of adults, in a structured environment, who lack the education and basic skills necessary to succeed in society. Correctional education programs are limited, though, in that they can assist adults only while they are incarcerated; therefore, having a strong relationship with adult education programs outside of the corrections system will help to ensure that ex-offenders, once they return to society, continue to improve upon the education and skills necessary to achieve success in the workplace, family, and community.

Endnotes

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deposit slip, locate the time and place of a meeting on a form, and identify a piece of specific information in a brief news article. Adults scoring at Level 2 were able to calculate the cost of a purchase or determine the difference between two items. They could also locate a particular intersection on a street map and enter background information on a simple form. Adults performing on Level 3 were able to integrate information from relatively long or dense text or from documents, to determine appropriate arithmetic operation based on information contained in the directive, or to identify the quantities needed to perform the operation. Adults scoring at Level 4 and 5 demonstrated proficiencies associated with the most challenging tasks in this assessment, many of which involved long and complex documents and text passages.

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Recommended Resources

American Correctional Association (ACA)

(800) 222-5646 and (301) 918-1800.

<http://www.corrections.com/aca/>

A professional membership association dedicated to the improvement of corrections and the training and development of correctional professionals, ACA's membership consists of individuals and organizations involved in all facets of corrections and criminal justice, including federal, state, and military correctional facilities and prisons, county jails and detention centers, probation/parole agencies, and community corrections/halfway houses located in the United States, Canada, and other nations. ACA serves the corrections community in various ways, including producing publications on topics such as offender programs, anger management, and professional development.

The Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA), American Library Association (ALA)

(800) 545-2433-1-4395

<http://www.ala.org/ascla/>

The ASCLA represents state library agencies, specialized library agencies, multitype library cooperatives, and independent librarians. The ASCLA maintains several electronic discussion lists including a discussion list covering prison librarianship (<http://www.ala.org/ascla/lists.html>)

Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS)

(202) 307-0765

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/welcome.html>

BJS collects, analyzes, publishes, and disseminates information on crime, criminal offenders, victims of crime, and the operation of justice systems at federal, state, and local levels of government. It also provides extensive demographics and census data on the federal and state prison populations.

Correctional Education Association (CEA)

(301) 918-1915 or (800) 783-1232 (Membership Services)

<http://www.ceanational.org/>

A professional association whose membership includes teachers and other education professionals that work in the nation's prisons, jails, juvenile facilities, and community corrections programs. Special interest groups within CEA include special education, juvenile issues, jails, English as a second language, and others. CEA holds annual conferences in each of its nine regions. CEA also hosts an international conference. Members receive quarterly journals and newsletters, an annual membership directory, and the Yearbook of Correctional Education.

Correctional Education Special Collection, National Institute for Literacy (NIFL)

(800) 783-1232

http://www.easternlincs.org/correctional_education/

Maintained by the Correctional Education Association, the Correctional Education Special Collection is a comprehensive collection of resources for basic skills and literacy programs in correctional education. Those interested in correctional education can find learning activities, share program administration techniques, join a discussion list, read news about the field, and find links to key correctional education sites.

The Corrections Connection

(617) 471-4445

<http://www.corrections.com/>

Sponsored by the American Correctional Association, the American Jail Association, and the American Probation and Parole Association, the Corrections Connection includes links to many federal, state, and local corrections-related sites. In addition, the Corrections Connection serves as an online weekly news source, providing an open forum where practitioners can exchange ideas and utilize best practices, resources, case studies, and new technologies.

Corrections Learning Network (CLN)

(800) 531-4288 or (509) 323-2764 or (509) 323-2767

<http://cln.esd101.net/>

CLN is a distance learning initiative that is part of the STEP Star Network and funded through the U.S. Department of Education. The Corrections Learning Network provides broadcast and computer-based professional development for correctional education instructors and administrators, as well as instruction for incarcerated youth and adults.

Council for Learning Disabilities

(913) 492-8755

<http://www.cldinternational.org/>

A membership organization, CLD is an international organization concerned about issues related to students with learning disabilities. CLD has local/state chapters that sponsor local and regional activities for individuals who want to keep current with the rapidly growing information base about people with learning disabilities.

Employment and Training Administration (ETA), U.S. Department of Labor

Regional, state, and local contacts can be found at the URL below.

<http://www.doleta.gov/>

The ETA, an agency of the U.S. Department of Labor, seeks to build up the labor market through the training of the workforce and the placement of workers in jobs through employment services. ETA's Web site includes information for adults, youth, dislocated workers, and workforce development professionals on workforce programs and services.

ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, & Vocational Education

(800) 848-4815 or (614) 292-7069

<http://www.ericacve.org>

A national education information network that is part of the National Library of Education, U.S. Department of Education, this clearinghouse provides comprehensive information on adult and continuing education, career education, vocational and technical education, and employment and training.

The Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP), U.S. Department of Justice

(202) 307-3198

<http://www.bop.gov/>

The Federal prison system is a nationwide system of prisons and detention facilities housing inmates who have been sentenced to imprisonment for Federal crimes and the detention of individuals awaiting trial or sentencing in Federal court. The Bureau strives to reduce future criminal activity by providing inmates with a range of programs, including work in prison industries and other institution jobs, vocational training, education, substance abuse treatment, parenting, anger management, and other programs that teach essential life skills, and encourage a crime-free lifestyle upon release to the community.

International Community Corrections Association

(608) 785-0200

<http://www.iccaweb.org/>

ICCA is a private, non-profit organization representing a continuum of community corrections programs. ICCA provides information, training, and other services to enhance the quality of services and supervision for offenders and to promote effective management practices.

The International Dyslexia Association (IDA)

(410) 296-0232

<http://www.interdys.org/>

The IDA promotes effective teaching approaches and related clinical education intervention strategies for dyslexics, supports and encourages interdisciplinary study and research, facilitates the exploration of the causes and early identification of dyslexia, and is committed to the reasonable and wide dissemination of research-based knowledge.

Laubach Literacy International (LLI)

(888) LAUBACH (528-2224)

<http://www.laubach.org>

LLI is a nonprofit educational corporation dedicated to helping adults of all ages improve their lives and their communities by learning reading, writing, math, and problem-solving skills. LLI promotes the role of volunteers in adult literacy programs and has instituted an accreditation program to ensure quality program management at the local level.

Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA)

(412) 341-1515

<http://www.ldaamerica.org/>

LDA is a national, non-profit organization of volunteers including individuals with learning disabilities, their families and professionals, that works to advance the education and welfare of children and adults of normal or potentially normal intelligence who manifest disabilities of a perceptual, conceptual, or coordinative nature.

Literacy Volunteers of America (LVA)

(315) 472-0001

<http://www.literacyvolunteers.org>

LVA is a national network of locally-based programs, supported by state and national staff. Professionally trained volunteer tutors teach basic literacy and ESL. While tutor training occurs at the local level, programs must meet LVA's program management quality standards in order to be accredited.

National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD)

(212) 545.7510

<http://www.ncld.org/>

NCLD's works to increase opportunities for all individuals with learning disabilities (LD) through increasing public awareness and understanding of LD, conducting educational programs and services that promote research-based knowledge, and providing national leadership in shaping public policy.

The National Center on Education, Disability, and Juvenile Justice (EDJJ)

(301) 405-6462

<http://www.edjj.org/>

Jointly funded by the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Justice, EDJJ is a collaborative research, training, technical assistance and dissemination program designed to develop more effective responses to the needs of youth with disabilities in the juvenile justice system or those at-risk for involvement with the juvenile justice system. EDJJ projects involve school and community-based prevention, education programs in detention and correctional settings, and transition activities as youth leave corrections and reenter their communities.

National Criminal Justice Reference Service

(800) 851-3420 or (301) 519-5500

<http://www.safety-net.org/default.htm>

NCJRS is a federally sponsored information clearinghouse for people around the country and the world involved with research, policy, and practice related to criminal and juvenile justice and drug control. NCJRS provides information on new publications, grants and funding opportunities, and other news and announcements on a host of topics including prisoner reentry, drug courts, and inmate programs.

The National Institute of Corrections (NIC), U.S. Department of Justice

(800) 995-6423 or (202) 307-3106

<http://www.nicic.org/index.htm>

An agency within the U.S. Department of Justice, NIC provides direct assistance, such as training, technical assistance, information services, and policy/program development, to federal, state, and local corrections agencies working with adult offenders. NIC works with correctional agencies on projects such as promoting job training, placement, and retention for offenders and ex-offenders, as well as delivering Thinking for a Change (an integrated cognitive behavior change program) to offenders. See NIC's online site map for a complete list of NIC's services and programs.

National Institute of Justice (NIJ), U.S. Department of Justice

(202) 307-2942

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/>

NIJ is the research and development agency of the U.S. Department of Justice. NIJ researches the nature and impact of crime and delinquency; develops applied technologies, standards and tools for criminal justice practitioners; evaluates existing programs and responses to crime; tests innovative concepts and program models in the field; assists policymakers, program partners, and justice agencies; and disseminates knowledge to many audiences. NIJ is involved in program areas such as crime control and prevention, justice systems and offender behavior, education and training technologies, and testing and standards.

National Institute for Literacy (NIFL)

(202) 233-2025

<http://www.nifl.gov>

NIFL was created to ensure that all Americans with literacy needs receive high-quality education and basic skills services necessary to achieve success in the workplace, family, and community. By fostering communication, collaboration, and innovation, NIFL works to build and strengthen national, regional, and state literacy infrastructures. NIFL provides support to correctional education programs through Bridges to Practice, Equipped for the Future, LINC, and other resources and projects.

**Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS),
U.S. Department of Education**

(202) 205-5465

<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/>

OSERS provides information on special education funding, and research and legislation, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). It also supports programs that help educate children and youth with disabilities, provide for the rehabilitation of youth and adults with disabilities, and supports research to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities.

Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE), U.S. Department of Education

(202) 205-5621

<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/OCE/index.html>

OVAE's focus is to provide information on issues such as adult education and literacy, career and technical education, high schools, and community colleges. Correctional education programs can receive support from OVAE through its Division of Vocational-Technical Education (DVTE), Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL), and Office of Correctional Education (OCE). OCE, for example, provides technical assistance to states, local schools, and correctional institutions; shares information on correctional education; and oversees programs and grants that help incarcerated youth and adults obtain the knowledge and skills they need to successfully return to society.

Positive Solutions Associates (PSA)

(215) 638-2340 or (215) 342-4067

<http://www.thinkright.com/index.html>

PSA provides therapeutic cognitive response model that is values-based and utilizes research-based and educationally centered techniques and principals. PSA's cognitive skills program is used nationwide in traditional corrections and community based settings, schools, and residential long- and short-term settings. PSA's programs are designed to teach skills and concepts that the offender intrinsically masters. PSA has utilized an outcomes based measurement instrument that identifies offenders needs (pre-testing), program adjustment (mid-range testing) and program completion (post-testing) to monitor the effectiveness of the model and allow for changes if necessary.

PRISON-LIB

<http://www.neflin.org/prison-lib/index.html>

PRISON-LIB is an electronic discussion list where people who provide library service to inmates in correctional institutions and juvenile detention centers discuss issues ranging from collection development to staff training to purchasing to security issues.

Reading is Fundamental (RIF)

(877) RIF-READ or (202) 287-3220

<http://www.rif.org/>

RIF develops and delivers children's and family literacy programs that help prepare young children for reading and motivate school-age children to read regularly. RIF has been used by correctional institutions to help parents develop the skills and self-confidence to take a lead role in supporting their children's reading and learning. The program also puts books directly into children's hands and engages them in motivational reading activities conducted by their parents.

SAFETY-NET

(888) 974-6328

<http://www.safety-net.org/default.htm>

A product of the Justice Distance Learning Consortium (JDLC)—a partnership among the Texas Youth Commission, the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, and the Florida Department of Corrections—SAFETY-NET is a distance learning network that provides services such as: satellite-delivered, high quality video educational programs; professional development for teachers and administrators; and access to discussion forums and a range of lesson plans. Start-up funding for SAFETY-NET has been provided by the Stars School Program of the U.S. Department of Education.

State Correctional Education Agencies

<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/ocecontacts.html>

To find contact information for a specific state correctional education agency, see the above URL (last updated on November 23, 2001).

State Literacy Resource Centers (SLRCs)

Phone numbers for SLRCs can be found at the URL below.

<http://www.ed.gov/Programs/basimp/SLRC.htm>

SLRCs works with state and local organizations to improve the capacity and coordination of literacy services. For a complete list of SLRCs, visit the above Web site.

The Urban Institute (UI)

(202) 833-7200

<http://www.urban.org/>

The Urban Institute (UI) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan policy research and education organization that examines the social, economic, and governance challenges facing the nation. The Justice Policy Center (JPC), one of nine centers within UI, conducts research to inform the national dialogue on crime, justice, and community safety. JPC researchers are actively involved in the development of a reentry portfolio. Endeavors within this area of research include creation of the Reentry Roundtable, publishing the monograph, *From Prison to Home: The Dimensions and Consequences of Prisoner Reentry*, and undertaking a longitudinal study called *Returning Home: Understanding the Challenges of Prisoner Reentry*.

To order additional copies of this report, please call
toll free (800) 228-8813 or visit the NIFL Web site at
<http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/policy/development.pdf>.

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U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
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